

This paper is a supplement to the Notice of Allowability mailed on 13 March 2009.

### EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Kenneth M. Berner (Reg. No. 37,093) on 18 May 2009.

The application has been amended as follows:

The following paragraphs in the Specification have been amended according to the following:

[0017] ~~According to the invention of Claim 1,~~ In a boot band according to one embodiment of the present invention, when the outer-layer portion climbs over the inner-layer portion during fastening of the band body, the pressure-reduction means formed in the outer-layer portion reduces the inward pressure on the inner-layer portion at the time of fastening. Therefore the outer-layer portion can slide over the inner-layer portion smoothly without extraordinary concentration of stress, so that problems like buckling of the inner-layer portion are prevented.

[0018] ~~The invention of Claim 2 is a boot band as described in Claim 1, and wherein said~~ Also, ~~the pressure-reduction means has a structure such that the outer-layer portion is displaced radially outward from the inner-layer portion when the outer-layer portion climbs over the engagement pawls.~~

[0019] ~~According to the invention of Claim 2~~ Also, because the outer-layer portion elastically is displaced radially outward from the inner-layer portion, the inward pressure on the inner-layer portion is reduced, especially on the protruding part such as the engagement pawls that are on the inner-layer portion. Thereby the outer-layer portion can slide over the inner-layer portion with

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such a limited friction force that locking of the protruding part does not occur, so that the resultant pressing force on the protruding part does not exceed the buckling-resistance limit, as a result of which buckling of the inner-layer portion is prevented.

[0020] ~~The invention of Claim 3 is a boot band as described in Claim 1 or 2, and wherein said~~ In the boot band according to the one embodiment of the present invention, the load-reduction means is structured such that an engagement-hole formation area, which is formed within the outer-layer portion and which contains the engagement holes, is separated--by cut lines along the longitudinal sides of said engagement-hole formation area--from the remaining, surrounding area of the outer-layer portion.

[0021] ~~According to the invention of Claim 3,~~ Also, because a part of the engagement-hole formation area of the outer-layer portion is separated from its periphery by the aforementioned cut lines, when the outer-layer portion climbs over the engagement pawls of the inner-layer portion and the engagement pawls are brought into contact with the engagement-hole formation area, the engagement-hole formation area is displaced outwardly in such a manner that this displacement of the engagement-hole formation area reduces the inward pressure on the inner-layer portion, so that buckling of the inner-layer portion is prevented.

[0022] ~~Also, according to the invention of Claim 3,~~ after the engagement-hole formation area displaces outwardly, it moves back inwardly by its own spring-back capability into its original state of moving along the inner-layer portion. Thereby, the engagement holes are automatically engaged with each other, so that such engagement makes the outer-layer portion and the inner-layer portion become mutually interconnected. Accordingly, fastening workability is improved.

[0023] ~~The invention of Claim 4 is a boot band as described in Claim 1 or 2, and wherein said~~ In a boot band according to a second embodiment of the present invention, the load-reduction means is structured such that an engagement-hole formation area, which is formed within the

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outer-layer portion and which contains the engagement holes, is separated, by cut lines along the longitudinal sides of said engagement-hole formation area, from the remaining, surrounding area of said outer-layer portion, and whereby said engagement-hole formation area is elastically flexed toward the inner-layer portion.

[0024] ~~According to the invention of Claim 4~~ Also, the engagement-hole formation area is flexed inwardly. But even with such flexing, at the time that the engagement pawls are brought into contact with the engagement-hole formation area, the engagement-hole formation area is displaced outwardly, so that the inward pressure on the inner-layer portion from the outer-layer portion is reduced, so that buckling of the inner-layer portion is prevented.

[0026] ~~The invention by Claim 5 is a boot band as described in Claim 1 or 2, and wherein said In~~ another variation of the second embodiment, the load-reduction means is structured such that an engagement-hole formation area, which is formed within the outer-layer portion and which contains the engagement holes, is separated, by cut lines along the longitudinal sides of engagement-hole formation area, from the remaining, surrounding area of the outer-layer portion, whereby said engagement-hole formation area further has a recoverable elastic sub-area that is connected with the remaining, surrounding area of the outer-layer portion.

[0027] ~~According to the invention of Claim 5~~ Also, when the outer-layer portion climbs over the engagement pawl of the inner-layer portion, because the engagement-hole formation area is displaced elastically outwardly, the inward pressure on the inner-layer portion from the outer-layer portion is reduced, so that buckling of the inner-layer portion is prevented. At this time, the elastic part that is formed at the connecting location is deformed, aiding the displacement of the engagement-hole formation area, but the engagement-hole formation area is returned to the original state by its recovering force after completing the action of climbing over of the engagement pawl. Such recovery of the elastic part helps the engagement-hole formation area contact the inner-layer portion with additional pressure, so that the engagement pawl is engaged with the engagement hole more surely. Thereby, fastening workability is improved, while moderate engagement can be realized.

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[0028] ~~The invention of Claim 6 is a boot band as described in Claim 1 or 2, and wherein said~~  
In a boot band according to another embodiment of the present invention, the pressure-reduction  
means are slits that are formed longitudinally in the outer-layer portion in such a manner that  
parts of the outer-layer portion are elastically raised on both sides of the slits by the engagement  
pawls that are being climbed over.

[0029] ~~According to the invention of claim 6~~ Also, when the outer-layer portion climbs over the  
engagement pawl of the inner-layer portion, the neighboring area of the slits in the outer-layer  
portion are elastically raised and displaced from the protruding part of the engagement pawl, so  
that the inward pressure on the inner-layer portion from the outer-layer portion is reduced,  
with the result that buckling of the inner-layer portion is prevented.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the  
examiner should be directed to Robert J. Sandy whose telephone number is 571-272-7073. The  
examiner can normally be reached on M-F (7:30-4:00).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's  
supervisor, Vic Batson can be reached on 571-272-6987. The fax phone number for the  
organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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/Robert J. Sandy/  
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3677